

## Address of the Central Committee—Continued.

The next, and perhaps the only remaining case, which the limits to which we are restricted will permit us to spread as fully before the people of Missouri as we desire, is that of William P. Harris, a Receiver of Public Money, at Columbus, Mississippi. He was a notorious drunkard, and a monthly defaulter, yet was kept in office on the principle of "better let it be" for between two and three years, and was at last permitted to resign (honorably!) after he had picked and stolen, from month to month, about \$160,000. If the following correspondence be not sufficient to fix the bluish of deep disgrace on the Secretary, on the President, and on all concerned; and if it be not sufficient, moreover, to convince every man, that so long as the system denounced by Col. Benton in 1826, and by General Jackson in 1829, remains unaltered, "corruption, speculation and THEFT will be the order of the day," we confess we shall despair of seeing our fellows convinced "though one were to rise from the dead."

To a correct conception of the case of Harris (which is selected from scores of others) we will first copy from the circular letters of Mr. Taney, and subsequently those of Mr. Woodbury, to various Receivers, all over the country. These circulars were intended to be shown to the people, in order to impress them with a favorable opinion of the strictness and attention of the administration, while the correspondence and the practice which follow will show that the sham and deception were well understood amongst the head men. Number 1, of the letters to receivers, is dated January 10, 1834, is directed to R. B. Sterling, and concludes as follows:

"I will only further add that the obligation to deposit the public money promptly, and to render your returns and accounts punctually, are imperative, and must, in future, be regarded as paramount to all other duties."

On the 18th of May 1834, Mr. Taney wrote to J. W. Dickinson, receiver at Mount Salem, Mississippi, as follows:

"Certificates of deposit are to be addressed to this office; these, and the prompt and punctual deposit of the public money, are to be regarded as paramount duties, the strict performance of which will be insisted on."

After this, Mr. Taney having been elevated to the bench of the Supreme Court, in consideration of his obsequiousness in removing the public deposits from the National to the State Banks, (the party are against State Banks now!) and Mr. Woodbury having been promoted to the Treasury desk, he addressed the following to some 7 or 8 Receivers:

"I regret to be under the necessity of noticing your omissions to make returns for the months of April, May, and June last. By a circular, dated the 19th of January last, you were advised of the necessity of promptitude in this respect. It remains that I should again remind you, once for all, that this is a duty which must be punctually observed."

In a letter to the receiver at Augusta, Mississippi, dated August 4, 1834, he says:

"Upon the subject of the request made in your letter of the 6th instant, I have to observe, that the Department cannot relax in the regulations prescribed for the periodical deposits of the public money."

On the 30th January, 1835, he writes to the receiver at Helena:

"The Department having received no duplicate of the monthly returns required by its regulations, showing the transactions of your office since your appointment, it becomes proper to call your immediate attention to this duty; and to inform you that punctuality in this respect, and in the deposit of the public money, are to be regarded as paramount duties, and will be insisted on accordingly."

To Linn, receiver at Vandalia, he says, February 12, 1835:

"Once for all, then, I will inform you that a strict observance of the regulations of the Department for the periodical deposit of the public money, and the transmission of your accounts and returns, are paramount duties, the neglect of which will be reported for the action of the Executive."

To the receiver at Demopolis he writes, February 20, 1835:

"I embrace the occasion to say to you, once for all, that punctuality in making your returns and deposits of the public money, are to be regarded as paramount duties, the neglect of which will be reported for the action of the Executive."

Again, February 28, 1835, in a circular to our fifteen receivers:

"I cannot omit the occasion to impress upon you the necessity of a strict attention to, and punctual compliance with, the duties required of you in regard to the prompt deposit of the public money, and transmission of your returns; and to say to you that the performance of these duties must be regarded as paramount to all others in your official station."

Again, July 30, 1835, the Secretary writes to the receiver at Helena:

"The regular deposit of the whole of the public money, as prescribed by the regulations of the Treasury, and the punctual transmission of your accounts and monthly returns, are paramount official duties."

So much, fellow citizens, for the outside of the public business—the part which the people were to be shown, and which is all, doubtless, they ever would have seen, but for the probing operations of a Congressional committee. We come now to the inside of the house—to the manner in which all these fair professions were understood by the parties—in short to the proof that this "paramount duty" was not only not enforced, but its repeated and (apparently) contemptuous disregard winked at, overlooked and countenanced.

"No official report of a Congressional committee or other public document, in any way exposing the wrongs and mal-practices of the administration, even finds its way to Missouri, by the agency of our Senators or Representatives. This eminently partial and unfair course—this abuse of the franking privilege, which was intended to promote the fair and impartial dissemination of light and truth amongst all the people—is the main reason why party delusion has been perpetuated in Missouri and New Hampshire more than in any other States in the Union. This is the effect of the general ticket system—and this was one of the main reasons urged for its adoption. The leaders of the party feared the light which would be shed upon public affairs, should the State be distracted and even one Whig be sent to Congress! Will not the people, however they may differ in other respects, accept their candidates for the Legislature to pledge themselves specifically in this respect? C. J. Benton, himself, in his letter of 1824, denounced 'the tyranny of the general ticket system'; and what was 'tyranny' then is made the hand-maid and concealer of corruption now! In the mean time, we hope to hear no patriotic warnings from the authors of this gross injustice—this perversion of the object of the franking privilege—should the studied and unjust neglect of our own representatives be partially counteracted by the kindness of our friends in Congress from other States. They have been written to, from many countries, in reference to the subject; and although they may be denounced, according to the slang of the day, as 'federalists,' we believe the time has come, when such catch-words (as these are) as they are general) will influence the verdict of men who think for themselves."

anced, until the Receiver, himself as if in very shame, could stand it no longer—and resigned!"

The correspondence with Harris commences during Mr. Taney's administration of the Treasury Department, from whom there are some two or three letters complaining of his neglect of official duty—but we quote only those of Mr. Woodbury, the present Secretary.

"TREASURY DEPARTMENT, Feb. 6, 1835.

Sir—I regret that there should be occasion for again calling your attention to the omission to render your monthly duplicate returns to this office, for the months of November and December, (those being in arrears,) and to remind you that punctuality in this respect is indispensable.

I am, &c.

LEVI WOODBURY, Secretary of the Treasury.

"W. P. HARRIS, Esq., Receiver of Public Money, Columbus, Miss."

Again:

"TREASURY DEPARTMENT, March 17, 1835.

"Sir—Having received no monthly duplicate return of the transactions of your office since that for the month of October last, it becomes my unpleasant duty to call your immediate attention to the omission. Allow me to express a hope that these may be no further occasion to remind you of the importance of punctuality in the transmissions of these returns."

I am, &c.

LEVI WOODBURY, Secretary of the Treasury.

"W. P. HARRIS, Esq., Receiver of Public Money, Columbus, Miss."

Again:

"TREASURY DEPARTMENT, June 25, 1835.

"Sir—Having on a communication addressed to you on the 17th of March last, and on several prior occasions, urged upon you the indispensable necessity of a strict attention to making your monthly returns, and the deposit of the public money, and the neglect of these duties, have been reported for the action of the Executive, and concluded as follows:

"I will only further add that the obligation to deposit the public money promptly, and to render your returns and accounts punctually, are imperative, and must, in future, be regarded as paramount to all other duties."

I am, &c.

LEVI WOODBURY, Secretary of the Treasury.

"Receiver of Public Money, Columbus."

Again:

"TREASURY DEPARTMENT, August 29, 1835.

"Sir—Agreeable to the intimation given you in my letter of the 25th of June, it has become my disagreeable duty to report your continued neglect to the President, who has instructed me to say to you, that if the monthly returns required from you by the regulations of the Treasury, which are in arrears, are not received at the Department on or before the 10th of October next, you will then be dismissed from office."

I am, &c.

LEVI WOODBURY, Secretary of the Treasury.

"W. P. HARRIS, Esq., Receiver of Public Money, Columbus, Miss."

Fellow citizens—do you expect to read in the next letter that this daily pecuniator is removed? You will be disappointed. Here it is:

"TREASURY DEPARTMENT, Sept. 22, 1835.

"Sir—Allow me to inquire why it is that your deposits are not made in the branch of the Planters' Bank at Columbus, instead of its parent bank at Natchez? Does the branch refuse to receive them, and credit the amount at the mother bank?"

I am, &c.

LEVI WOODBURY, Secretary of the Treasury.

"W. P. HARRIS, Esq., Receiver of Public Money, Columbus, Miss."

"P.S. Your return for the month of February last has been received to-day, and shows a large amount on hand not deposited; and you are hereby required, if not already done, to deposit any balance still on hand in the above branch, to the credit of the Treasury, and forward promptly thereafter, in order to save time and expense in travelling to Natchez."

It would seem he liked to have forgotten that the fellow was in default at all! The postcript recollects it, and then merely requests the performance of an oft-neglected duty! But he writes him again in a week:

"TREASURY DEPARTMENT, Sept. 28, 1835.

"Sir—I regret to say that the reasons assigned in your letter of the 14th inst. for withholding your monthly returns are not heretofore deemed satisfactory. I am positive no sufficient cause for their being delayed longer than the first week in each succeeding month, as there can be no difficulty in a certificate at once the amount of money received within the month, or in stating the amount of your disbursements and deposits during the month. This is all that is required in them. The object of these returns is to afford the Department the earliest information in regard to the money operations of the Land Office, and the punctual transmission of all the money received to the bank of deposit. They are therefore of paramount importance, and cannot be permitted to wait the completion of detailed book entries, or the perfection of other business, be it character what it may."

I am, &c.

LEVI WOODBURY, Secretary of the Treasury.

"W. P. HARRIS, Esq., Receiver of Public Money, Columbus, Miss."

Next comes a terrible warning!

"TREASURY DEPARTMENT, Oct. 12, 1835.

"Sir—Trusting to the assurance given in your letter of the 14th ultimo, and to those of your friends upon the facts now before him, to continue you in office until the 12th of November proximo, then, unless your monthly returns are all rendered, and satisfactory evidence that the whole of the public money, which you are chargeable are deposited, and which must be removed from office, however painful to both him and this Department."

I am, &c.

LEVI WOODBURY, Secretary of the Treasury.

"W. P. HARRIS, Esq., Receiver of Public Money, Columbus, Miss."

He gives him till November proximo. Now for your duty—work up, my honest, faithful fellow! It will be painful to remove so worthy a servant!

Ryland, and any other man who does not go with the party in all things, shall be removed instantly, no matter how faithful they are in their office—but it will be painful to remove so obsequious a friend as you are. October came—the 12th of November came—he yet did not deposit, but yet is retained. Read the two following:

"TREASURY DEPARTMENT, Oct. 26, 1835.

"Sir—I have to observe, in reply to your letter of the 9th instant, that the allowance authorized by the regulations of the Department, as a compensation for travelling expenses, and risk in the transmission of the public money to the bank of deposit, can only be made when such expenses and risk have actually been incurred, and not in any case where both are avoided, by means of the facilities afforded by the mail or deposit banks; moreover, inasmuch as the branch bank of Columbus receives and credits the money received by you in the first instance, I can perceive no reason why each deposit in past months should not have embraced the whole amount in your possession at the time of such deposit, as the instructions require."

I am, &c.

LEVI WOODBURY, Secretary of the Treasury.

"W. P. HARRIS, Esq., Receiver of Public Money, Columbus, Miss."

Again:

"TREASURY DEPARTMENT, Nov. 25, 1835.

"Sir: Your letter of the 11th instant, and return for the month of October, is received. As your deposits of public money are made at Columbus, no reason whatever can be given why the whole money in your hands at the end of the month is not deposited. It is expected that it will be hereafter."

I am, &c.

LEVI WOODBURY, Secretary of the Treasury.

"W. P. HARRIS, Esq., Receiver of Public Money, Columbus, Miss."

Again:

"TREASURY DEPARTMENT, Jan. 10, 1836.

"Sir: I enclose a copy of a letter from Henry Plattner, complaining of your official conduct, and have to request that you will furnish prompt and satisfactory explanations."

I am, &c.

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"W. P. HARRIS, Esq., Receiver of Public Money, Columbus, Miss."

He has escaped! But is soon in a tight place again.

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LEVI WOODBURY, Secretary of the Treasury.

"W. P. HARRIS, Esq., Receiver of Public Money, Columbus, Miss."

Again:

"TREASURY DEPARTMENT, March 28, 1836.

"Sir: Your letter of the 13th inst. enclosing your return for the month of November, is received. Again it becomes my unpleasant duty to complain of your neglect in this respect, and to inform you that the omission to transmit the required monthly statements, for a whole quarter after these are due, cannot be permitted in any public office, and especially after a single bank has been so often reminded of the consequences of its neglect. On the return of the mail, therefore, if the usual statements for the other months in arrears are not received, I shall be under the disagreeable necessity of again submitting the subject to the President, for his immediate action."

I am, &c.

LEVI WOODBURY, Secretary of the Treasury.

"W. P. HARRIS, Esq., Receiver of Public Money, Columbus, Miss."

Again:

"TREASURY DEPARTMENT, June 6, 1836.

"Sir: Your letter of the 23d ult. accompanied by your returns for the month of April, is received. Seeing the balance of public money in your hands, amounted to \$128,841.70 at the end of that month, I have to request that you will explain why it was that the whole of the public money in your hands on the last of the previous month was not deposited. Instead of a part, in conformity to explicit and frequent instructions on that point. It is expected to be obliged to ask you so often for explanations."

I am, &c.

LEVI WOODBURY, Secretary of the Treasury.

"W. P. HARRIS, Esq., Receiver of Public Money, Columbus, Miss."

At last, fellow citizens, even W. P. Harris bore a better sense of shame than the Secretary of the Treasury! He returned, full-handed, and it was graciously received by the Secretary, as follows:

"TREASURY DEPARTMENT, Sept. 21, 1836.

"Sir: Your letter of the 27th ult. addressed to the President, has been referred to this office. Your duties as receiver, will, of course, have ceased, or been suspended, after the 31st ultimo, the time when your resignation should have taken effect. It is, however, in the hands of the President, and we shall confess ourselves undecided whether they come to the end of the line, or not. In the very anxiety of the President, we have referred you, it will be shown that the responsibility of the continuation of the FIDELITY PARTY, after they had failed in their project to have their offices closed for life or during good behavior. We have referred ourselves that we have demonstrated its dangerous and corrupting tendency, and we leave it with our fellow-republicans of the State to decide whether, if Mr. VAN BUREN had never so well, the INTERESTS OF THE UNION AND THE UNDISPUTED PRESIDENTIAL INSTRUCTIONS, DO NOT REQUIRE THAT NO MAN, OR SET OF MEN, SHALL HAVE CONTROL OF THE GOVERNMENT BY A SINGLE PARTY? (as is alleged by General Smith, in 1829, to have a Jefferson and a Jackson to contend successfully against the government party) in their day, may we not felicitate ourselves that a Harrison is reserved for us? If he be not a man upon whom the reflecting and patriotic of all previous parties can unite, to break up this over-shadowing and corrupting influence of the government party, the people may surrender to corruption, and how their heads to whatever may occur hereafter. If they will not establish the precedent by a majority of their voices, they will not—THEY CANNOT amend the Constitution by the mere voice of two-thirds of Congress, or three-fourths of the States hereafter; for the servants of the people, having thus become stronger than the people themselves, the citizen who would hereafter essay to expose the venality and corruption which purchases public impunity by the use of public patronage and public money—that man will be marked and doomed for persecution and ostracism. But few men will be found thus bolding themselves to destruction, both private and public, in a course so hopeless and against odds so fearful. The people, too, will regard a further struggle as hopeless and unavailing—and there is hence forced upon us, as a compromise, this branch of our investigation and reflections, the most solemn, stern, and sad conviction, that the contest which is now going forward is the last practical appeal which can be made to the patriotism of the people. If unsuccessul now, their country is lost and gone forever!"

If we have been successful in convincing our fellow citizens that the Presidential power, and patronage is already too great for a republic, they will be especially reluctant to follow the lead of intervention in his new and dangerous scheme for its enlargement. We denounce in response of the Sub-treasury new scheme, not only because he is the first American President that ever brought it forward, but because he, and nearly all his friends were opposed to it, and voted against it in 1835, when brought forward by a friend of Mr. Calhoun. The recently proclaimed evolution between those who, when nominated by General Jackson, but his of little moment. He was a sub-treasury—and his example, along with some besides, furnishes a bright and burning commentary upon the beauties and the safety of the system. What would be in price, in England or France, or the hosts of reflection in Texas, care for the Presidential scheme of the bill—a thing unavailing for under any previous administration, and which will be a little needed hereafter, when the Jeffersonian rule of "honesty and capacity" is re-established as the sole guaranty of power.

Mr. Woodbury was formerly Governor of this State, and his brother was recently the abolition candidate for Congress. The influence of such men cannot be dispensed with, in the present extremity of the President—and besides this, if an honest man, of any party, were put in the place of Woodbury, the Congressional call for information would be fully and promptly answered, and the exposure of the yet hidden frauds of this MOST CORRUPT and controlling department would arouse the people as men to the cause of the present financial distress and embarrassment. "BETTER LATE THAN NEVER."

See speech of Gen. Alexander Smith—Appendix A.

1 See appendix—B. 2 See appendix—C.

and ran through a period of ABOUT NINE YEARS! with the knowledge of his principal subordinates! His peculations grew larger and larger, until they reached the enormous aggregate of about ONE MILLION AND A QUARTER OF DOLLARS—yet the Secretary of the Treasury, under whose vigilant supervision this large and overwhelming defalcation grew up and occurred, not only affects to have known nothing about it while it was going on, but actually permitted him to go on of office on the 20th day of March 1838, absent on the 6th of August, and not even then proceed against him until November! Why this delay, from April to November, to ascertain the facts and institute proceedings, even if the registry, which had been running on and accumulating for nine years, had not been known before the 20th of March or the 6th of August? A single week would have been amply sufficient for the investigation of the case, and the institution of the proper judicial proceedings, had not the political fears and political interests of the party required that it should be denied, and hushed up, as it was, until after the October elections in that great State! "Better let it be!" or, as we saw New York in October, "is the plain interpretation of the conduct of the administration in relation to this most culpable and stupendous case of fraud and perjury. Thank Heaven! This notorious transaction had at last to be exposed—and New York has placed her irreconcilable and unshaken adherence to her favorite son," of the hundreds of which this case constitutes so prepossessing an exemplification! We have seen but to add, fellow citizens, that the foregoing constitutes but a type of the proven mal-practices, and official neglect of Levi Woodbury, who is yet the Secretary of our Treasury, under the control of Martin Van Buren! That treasury is now bankrupt and begging, and we submit to your deliberate reflection to answer, on what other ground can such a man be continued in so important an office, than that it is thought "better to let him be" than run the risk of losing even New Hampshire! Is it!

Unless the deep and anxious reflection which we have given to this subject, instead of enlightening has benighted our understanding, the president proposed by General Harrison will go further to out in the fatal pre-eminence of these corrupting considerations, and the corrupt consequences of this hateful influence at Washington, than any other remedy within the power of the people. That we are not original in this opinion, we have already stated. That it was an object deeply cherished by the soundest and most enlightened friends and supporters of General Jackson, might be demonstrated by their arguments and their speeches towards the close of the administration of the younger Adams. Alas! that an object which has so confidently and obviously increased its importance since that period, as to be again recalled to the world's notice, should be abandoned by its very fathers! To-day, however, is in the hands of THE PEOPLE, and we shall confess ourselves undecided whether they come to the end of the line, or not. In the very anxiety of the President, we have referred you, it will be shown that the responsibility of the continuation of the FIDELITY PARTY, after they had failed in their project to have their offices closed for life or during good behavior. We have referred ourselves that we have demonstrated its dangerous and corrupting tendency, and we leave it with our fellow-republicans of the State to decide whether, if Mr. VAN BUREN had never so well, the INTERESTS OF THE UNION AND THE UNDISPUTED PRESIDENTIAL INSTRUCTIONS, DO NOT REQUIRE THAT NO MAN, OR SET OF MEN, SHALL HAVE CONTROL OF THE GOVERNMENT BY A SINGLE PARTY? (as is alleged by General Smith, in 1829, to have a Jefferson and a Jackson to contend successfully against the government party) in their day, may we not felicitate ourselves that a Harrison is reserved for us? If he be not a man upon whom the reflecting and patriotic of all previous parties can unite, to break up this over-shadowing and corrupting influence of the government party, the people may surrender to corruption, and how their heads to whatever may occur hereafter. If they will not establish the precedent by a majority of their voices, they will not—THEY CANNOT amend the Constitution by the mere voice of two-thirds of Congress, or three-fourths of the States hereafter; for the servants of the people, having thus become stronger than the people themselves, the citizen who would hereafter essay to expose the venality and corruption which purchases public impunity by the use of public patronage and public money—that man will be marked and doomed for persecution and ostracism. But few men will be found thus bolding themselves to destruction, both private and public, in a course so hopeless and against odds so fearful. The people, too, will regard a further struggle as hopeless and unavailing—and there is hence forced upon us, as a compromise, this branch of our investigation and reflections, the most solemn, stern, and sad conviction, that the contest which is now going forward is the last practical appeal which can be made to the patriotism of the people. If unsuccessul now, their country is lost and gone forever!"

If we have been successful in convincing our fellow citizens that the Presidential power, and patronage is already too great for a republic, they will be especially reluctant to follow the lead of intervention in his new and dangerous scheme for its enlargement. We denounce in response of the Sub-treasury new scheme, not only because he is the first American President that ever brought it forward, but because he, and nearly all his friends were opposed to it, and voted against it in 1835, when brought forward by a friend of Mr. Calhoun. The recently proclaimed evolution between those who, when nominated by General Jackson, but his of little moment. He was a sub-treasury—and his example, along with some besides, furnishes a bright and burning commentary upon the beauties and the safety of the system. What would be in price, in England or France, or the hosts of reflection in Texas, care for the Presidential scheme of the bill—a thing unavailing for under any previous administration, and which will be a little needed hereafter, when the Jeffersonian rule of "honesty and capacity" is re-established as the sole guaranty of power.

Mr. Woodbury was formerly Governor of this State, and his brother was recently the abolition candidate for Congress. The influence of such men cannot be dispensed with, in the present extremity of the President—and besides this, if an honest man, of any party, were put in the place of Woodbury, the Congressional call for information would be fully and promptly answered, and the exposure of the yet hidden frauds of this MOST CORRUPT and controlling department would arouse the people as men to the cause of the present financial distress and embarrassment. "BETTER LATE THAN NEVER."

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Mr. Woodbury was formerly Governor of this State, and his brother was recently the abolition candidate for Congress. The influence of such men cannot be dispensed with, in the present extremity of the President—and besides this, if an honest man, of any party, were put in the place of Woodbury, the Congressional call for information would be fully and promptly answered, and the exposure of the yet hidden frauds of this MOST CORRUPT and controlling department would arouse the people as men to the cause of the present financial distress and embarrassment. "BETTER LATE THAN NEVER."

See speech of Gen. Alexander Smith—Appendix A.

1 See appendix—B. 2 See appendix—C.

and ran through a period of ABOUT NINE YEARS! with the knowledge of his principal subordinates! His peculations grew larger and larger, until they reached the enormous aggregate of about ONE MILLION AND A QUARTER OF DOLLARS—yet the Secretary of the Treasury, under whose vigilant supervision this large and overwhelming defalcation grew up and occurred, not only affects to have known nothing about it while it was going on, but actually permitted him to go on of office on the 20th day of March 1838, absent on the 6th of August, and not even then proceed against him until November! Why this delay, from April to November, to ascertain the facts and institute proceedings, even if the registry, which had been running on and accumulating for nine years, had not been known before the 20th of March or the 6th of August? A single week would have been amply sufficient for the investigation of the case, and the institution of the proper judicial proceedings, had not the political fears and political interests of the party required that it should be denied, and hushed up, as it was, until after the October elections in that great State! "Better let it be!" or, as we saw New York in October, "is the plain interpretation of the conduct of the administration in relation to this most culpable and stupendous case of fraud and perjury. Thank Heaven! This notorious transaction had at last to be exposed—and New York has placed her irreconcilable and unshaken adherence to her favorite son," of the hundreds of which this case constitutes so prepossessing